



## Empowering youth to fight against tobacco

### Youth In Action

March 2006

#### What youth can do

Teach younger kids the dangers of tobacco use

Talk to doctors about promoting quitting among their patients

Encourage restaurants, bowling alleys, and other businesses to become smoke-free

Create public service announcements, videos, posters, and other public education materials

Promote smoke-free youth events

Take part in national events such as the Great American Smoke Out

#### Youth are vulnerable to tobacco industry ploys

Young people are exposed to tens of thousands of tobacco ads and promotions by the time they are 12 years old – the average age youth begin using tobacco. The deluge of images on billboards, in store displays, and on magazine pages has created a friendly familiarity with tobacco. It has shaped a youth culture which views tobacco use as glamorous, social, grown-up, and rebellious. The result – 45 Washington youth start smoking every day. One out of three of these new smokers will die prematurely.

#### Helping youth fight back

The Washington State Department of Health encourages youth to join it as full partners in the fight against tobacco. The department and its partner organizations support youth efforts to counter tobacco industry advertising, change attitudes in their community about tobacco, and prevent tobacco use among other young people. To increase the number of high school-aged youth who are trained and taking action against tobacco use, the department:

- Encourages local tobacco prevention programs to form and supports youth anti-tobacco action groups.
- Helps existing local youth anti-tobacco groups recruit new members.
- Provides training, skill development, and networking opportunities for youth and their adult advisors.

The Department of Health's primary partners in building youth partnerships are the American Cancer Society, the American Lung Association of Washington, and GMMB. Each provides valuable support to youth advocates

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#### American Lung Association of Washington – Teens Against Tobacco Use

The American Lung Association discourages tobacco use among children through a peer education program called Teens Against Tobacco Use (T.A.T.U.). Adults are trained to teach teens about the risks of tobacco use, refusal skills, deceptive practices of the tobacco industry, youth advocacy, and presentation skills. Teens, in turn, serve as positive role models and present this information to younger kids through classroom presentations.

Find out more about  
secondhand smoke:  
[SecondhandSmokesYou.com](http://SecondhandSmokesYou.com)

Teens are invited to participate on one of the association's regional councils. The association awards mini-grants of up to \$500 to local organizations and coalitions to carry out youth tobacco prevention activities. For additional information call 1-800-732-9339 or visit [www.alaw.org/tobacco\\_control](http://www.alaw.org/tobacco_control).

Find out more about the  
Tobacco Quit Line at:  
[www.quitline.com](http://www.quitline.com)

### **American Cancer Society – Speak OUT!**

The American Cancer Society helps youth leaders and their adult partners build strong youth coalitions for tobacco prevention and advocacy. The Cancer Society provides training to beginning youth coalitions through the *SpeakOut!* Youth Initiative program. Workshops are held throughout the state and participants receive a toolkit as well as the ability to apply for mini-grants. Experienced teen advocates ages 14-18 wishing to gain advanced skills should consider attending a *SpeakOut!* Summer Summit. These annual summits are open only to teens who have participated in *Camp SpeakOut!* or the *SpeakOut!* Youth Initiative or served with a youth coalition for two or more years. For additional information, call 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

Visit our youth Web site at:  
[SeeThruTheSmoke.com](http://SeeThruTheSmoke.com)

### **Youth Action Teams**

Youth Action Teams (YATs) are anti-tobacco youth groups that work to raise awareness of the dangers of tobacco and secondhand smoke, and influence tobacco policy in their communities. Members of these groups have been involved in T.A.T.U. and Speak OUT! training and are ready for more intensive projects. The Tobacco Program supports the YAT program by providing technical assistance and communications guidance to these teams, via GMMB, a Seattle communications firm. For additional information, contact GMMB at 206-352-8598.

### **Call to action**

The Department of Health calls upon high school-aged youth to turn creative thinking into action that will make a difference in their neighborhoods, schools, and cities. It calls upon local tobacco prevention programs to use the resources provided by this initiative to recruit and involve youth in their efforts to prevent initiation and reduce tobacco use in their communities. With the help of this initiative, youth and adults working together can increase the number of youth who disapprove of tobacco use, resent tobacco industry manipulations, and encourage their peers and parents to quit.

### **A comprehensive approach to fighting tobacco use**

Research shows that state anti-tobacco programs must be broad-based and comprehensive to be effective. In addition to involving youth in the fight against tobacco, Washington's Tobacco Prevention and Control Program supports communities and schools, conducts a public awareness and media campaign, supports stop smoking activities, supports efforts to limit the availability of tobacco to minors, and assesses the effectiveness of state and local program activities.

For more information on  
tobacco prevention:  
[www.doh.wa.gov/tobacco](http://www.doh.wa.gov/tobacco)